

Bulletin for Sunday 3rd October 2021

Good Morning, Friends.

With the weather becoming so much more autumnal in the last few days, it's time for our Bulletin service to celebrate God's provision for us in a Harvest Festival. So perhaps let's begin by remembering or imagining a harvest loaf, with a little bread mouse among the stalks of corn, and a colourful display of fruit and vegetables....

We pause as we prepare to worship..... and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: For the fruits of all creation (R&S 42)

Prayer: Gracious God, creator of the beautiful world around us
and source of all life, we come in praise and gratitude.
For all your gifts to us, summer and winter,
sun and rain, springtime and harvest, we thank you!
For the smell of freshly baked bread,
for the taste of juicy apples,
for the abundance of runner beans,
and especially for the joy of sharing meals together,
generous God we thank you!
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we give, in your service,
now and always. In Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Psalm 8 and Deuteronomy 8: 7-14

Reflection: The psalmist was in awe, pointing to the wonders of the night sky, with the moon and the almost unimaginably myriad stars, which - against the inky blackness of an ancient middle eastern night - must indeed have been stunning. The psalm moves on, however, to confidence in the authority which has been vested in us: to have dominion over (implying also responsibility for) other creatures. Sadly, in recent generations we have realised that our stewardship of the earth, and the creatures that share it with us, hasn't always been as sensitive and responsible as it should.

In contrast, the writer of Deuteronomy had less confidence in human nature, and for that very reason provided us with a classic harvest reading. It describes the wonderful things which God has provided - food and water in abundance, as well as other natural resources of the land. However it then goes on to remind us that it is indeed God from whom these things come, and we should never forget that, or fail to be thankful.

"When you have eaten your fill... and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God..."

So we give thanks for our many blessings - especially the food and drink that we both need and enjoy. But we remember that despite the hard work of farmers and growers, scientists and plant breeders, we are still dependent on the sun, the rain and the seasons. We remember God's good gifts, and give thanks for the harvest! Amen.

Hymn: We plough the fields and scatter (R&S 124)

Prayer: God of life, in a world capable of feeding us all,
we pray for those who go to bed hungry.
In a world full of power from wind and sun,
we pray for those who sit in cold and darkness.
In a world where rain literally falls from the sky,
we pray for those without clean water to drink.
May we learn how to share, and may those working
to right these wrongs, and to heal your world,
be blessed and strengthened in their work.
As we hold before you those in need today,
Loving God, hear all our prayers,
spoken and unspoken, in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: Come, ye thankful people, come (R&S 40)

Blessing: May we be awed by the wonder of creation
and always, always grateful for the harvest;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
now and always. Amen

Please continue to remember that we all have a part to play in caring and doing what we can to keep each other safe from Covid, and that includes letting us know if you have a positive Covid test after recently being in church. Sadly it's impossible to make our churches completely risk-free.

There will be an evening 'Sunday at Six' service on Zoom at 6pm as usual. All welcome.

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